

# STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

## **POLICY: RATES POSTPONEMENT**

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Corporate Services	<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Director Corporate Services</li></ul>
<b>SECTION:</b>	
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> 2018/2019	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> 2022/2023
<b>VERSION:</b> 3	<b>APPROVAL DATE:</b> 13/02/2018

### **POLICY**

1. The Stratford District Council has decided to postpone all or part of the rates owed by the ratepayer in respect of rating units covered by this Rates Postponement Policy provided that the conditions within this policy have been met. Rates postponement will be provided for the following categories of rating units and under the following circumstances:
  - Extreme financial Hardship.
  - Farmland affected by natural disasters.
2. Where a rating unit for which the Stratford District Council has granted a rates postponement is sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of, the rates postponement shall be terminated at the time of disposal. If the new ratepayer qualifies for a rates postponement under this policy, it should be up to that ratepayer to apply for a rates postponement.
3. The application for rates postponement must be made to the Stratford District Council prior to the commencement of the rating year. Applications received during a rating year will be applicable from the commencement of the following rating year. Applications will not be backdated.  
No postponement will be granted on targeted rates for water supply, wastewater system or waste management collection.
4. Where a rates postponement percentage applies, it is calculated on the rates that would be assessed before any application of non-rateable adjustments. (For example, if a property is 50% non-rateable, and receives a 50% postponement, then no rates are due).

### **POSTPONEMENT FOR EXTREME FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**

1. The Stratford District Council will provide rates postponement up to 100% to all ratepayers who meet the objectives, conditions and criteria of this policy.  
A Postponement for Extreme Financial Hardship Committee, comprising the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Chief Executive, has delegated power under Schedule 7,

Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2002 to assess a ratepayer's application for rates postponement.

2. **Objective**

The objective of this postponement policy is to assist ratepayers experiencing extreme financial hardship which affects their ability to pay rates.

3. **Conditions and Criteria**

Council will consider, on a case by case basis, all applications received that meet its criteria.

Only rating units used solely for residential purposes as defined by Council will be eligible for consideration for rates postponement for extreme financial circumstances.

Formal application must be made by the ratepayer or the ratepayer's authorised agent to Council, providing full information as required by Council.

When considering whether extreme financial circumstances exist, all of the ratepayer's personal circumstances will be relevant including the following factors:

- age;
- physical or mental disability;
- injury;
- illness; and
- family circumstances.

Before approving an application Council must be satisfied that the ratepayer is unlikely to have sufficient funds left over, after the payment of rates, for normal health care and proper provision for maintenance of his/her home and chattels at an adequate standard, as well as making provision for normal day to day living expenses.

Any postponed rates will be postponed until:

- the death of the ratepayer; or
- until the ratepayer ceases to be the owner or occupier of the rating unit; or
- until the ratepayer ceases to use the property as his/her residence; or
- until a date specified by the Council.

The application for a postponement under this policy will be assessed by the Postponement for Extreme Financial Hardship Committee independently from the Government Rates Rebate Scheme.

## **FARMLAND AFFECTED BY NATURAL DISASTERS**

1. The Stratford District Council will provide rates postponement up to 100% for two years to all ratepayers who meet the objectives, conditions and criteria of this policy. A Postponement for Natural Disaster Hardship Committee, comprising the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive, and a non voting representative from Taranaki Federated Farmers will be delegated the authority to assess a ratepayer's application for rates postponement.
2. **Objective**

The objective of this postponement policy is to assist farming ratepayers experiencing extreme financial hardship as a result of a natural disaster. A natural disaster is

considered as including, but not necessarily limited to, flooding, earthquake damage or a storm.

### 3. **Conditions and Criteria**

Council will consider, on a case by case basis, all applications received that meet its criteria.

Only rating units used solely for farming purposes as defined by Council will be eligible for consideration for rates postponement for extreme financial circumstances. Formal application must be made by the ratepayer or the ratepayer's authorised agent, providing full information as required by the Postponement for Natural Disaster Hardship Committee.

When considering whether extreme financial circumstances exist, all of the ratepayer's personal circumstances will be relevant including the following factors:

- Nature of the natural disaster;
- Financial position of the farm;
- Business Plan for recovery of the farm;

Before approving an application Council must be satisfied that the ratepayer is unlikely to have sufficient funds left over, after the payment of rates, for normal health care, as well as making provision for normal day to day living expenses.